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ABSTRACT

The report asserts that U.S. and Wisconsin schools and workers are being used as scapegoats for the nation's and the state's social and economic problems. The propositions that U.S. students are not globally competitive and U.S. schools failures are "complete hoaxes." The report further asserts that a third big hoax being perpetrated on schools and workers is that undefined new and emerging high-tech, high-skill, high-pay jobs of the future are dramatically increasing in numbers. The paper suggests that most jobs do not require higher-level education or math and science skills and that technology and computers are making jobs simpler, rather than more difficult. Wisconsin's Bureau of Workplace Information tabulates and analyzes work force data. The Wisconsin Projections for 1994-2005 are more objective than the U.S. Department of Labor's job projections. This position paper includes six graphs containing U.S. Department of Labor and Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development employment projections for selected occupations through 2006 and a comparison of the two sets of projections. (MN)

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The Big Con in Education in the U.S. and Wisconsin

Report 3 1998

What is The Big Con?

(See back page)

Center for the Study of Jobs & Education in Wisconsin

April 1998

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About the Center

The Center for the Study of Jobs & Education in Wisconsin is an independent private and non-profit educational research center.

Founded in July 1995 under the leadership of the late John Shaffer a community activist who died at the age of 93 in February 1996.

The priority of the Center is to provide the political and educational leaders of the State of Wisconsin credible statistical evidence and knowledgeable information so that they can make policy decisions for the benefit of all of the citizens of the state. Public policy should reflect the needs and concerns of all and not just specific special interests.

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The Big Con in Education in the U.S. and Wisconsin and The Jobs of the Future

- United States and Wisconsin schools and workers are being used as scapegoats for the nations and the states social and economic problems. It is a big con.

- The big con is based on a number of hoaxes including:
  (1) United States students are not globally competitive and are not keeping up with their international peers.
  (2) Schools in the U.S. are sometimes described by school bashers led by the business interests and the university elite as "complete failures". They say, schools are not preparing students for the high tech, high skill, "jobs of the future" and radical reform of education is critically needed.
  (3) Undefined new and emerging high tech, high skill, high pay jobs of the future are dramatically increasing in numbers. These jobs require that "all" students achieve higher cognitive skills including critical thinking. All students "must" take advanced math and science courses.

- These hoaxes are perpetuating a disaster for failing poor students for no good reason. Public education is the foundation of our nations democracy and every student should have the opportunity and be encouraged to achieve at the highest level possible. Education for educations sake is good. However, the majority of jobs do not require higher level education or math and science skills. Technology and computers make jobs simpler not more difficult and makes workers more productive so that fewer workers are needed.

- The inspiration for this big con piece is an annual review of U.S. Dept. of Labor job projections and Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development employment projections to 2005. The Bureau of Workforce Information in Wisconsin does an excellent job of tabulating and analyzing workforce data. Unfortunately and obviously, very few people use the objective Wisconsin Projections 1994-2005. The public is fed, by the media, research and analysis of employment data that is too often nonsense and hype. The hype comes from Government agencies like the U.S. Dept. of Education, national research centers, universities and the business interests and their brethren feeding at the public and private trough.

- Another inspiration for this report is the outrageously simplistic and stupid statements by the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. university elite and top U.S. government administration about international comparisons of U.S. schools with other nations.

Analysis of Wisconsin Occupational Projections to 2005

Total employment in Wisconsin is projected to increase by 478,300 in the 1994-2005 period, rising from 2.68 million to 3.16 million. Among about 720 occupations projected, the 30 with the greatest employment account for 245,920 (51%) of the projected increase. (See Graph 1 & 2)

A majority of the top 30 occupations with the largest numerical job growth, 18 (60%) are Short Term training jobs with the lowest earnings ranks for full-time workers, 4 require moderate-length training or experience, 4 require a bachelor's degree, 2 require Work experience in a related occupation, one Registered Nursing an Associate degree and one, General Managers and Top Executives "may" require a bachelor's degree or more and work experience (see Graph 1 & 2) The latter category is so broad that 33% of all managers or administrators in Wisconsin are listed as General Managers and Top Executives. This category should not be considered as an individual occupation.

The top 30 occupations (4% of 720 occupations) total 1 million workers, 37% of all workers, in 1994 and are projected to total 1.2 million, 38% of all workers in 2005. (See Graph 1 & 2)

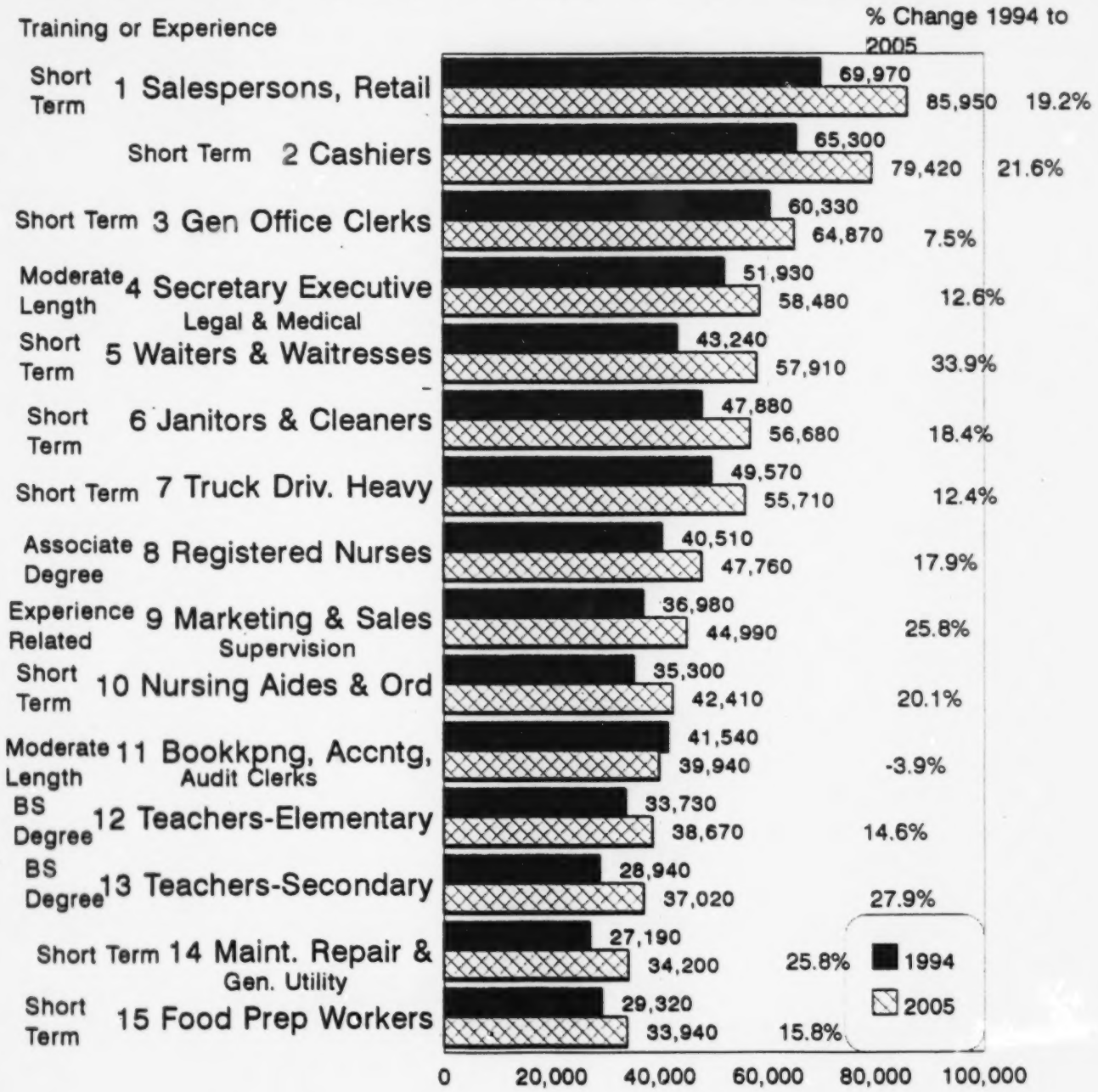
It is projected that there will be a total of 103,201 job openings in Wisconsin each year to 2005. It is estimated that about 42% of annual job openings will be growth in new jobs and 58% job replacements. The Center estimates from the DWD projections that more than 50% of job openings will be in Short Term training or experience occupations. As shown on Graph 3, 6 Short Term training Occupational Areas are projected to have 969,810 (65%) of 1.5 million workers in 2005 represented by the 12 selected Occupational Areas on the graph. These 1.5 million workers represent 47.5% of all workers in 2005. The selected Occupational Areas may be over represented in occupations requiring a bachelor's degree. (See Graph 3)

The 60 job titles for all Engineers, Engineering Technicians, Natural Scientists & Related Occupations, Physical & Life Science Technicians, Computer & Math Occupations, Computer & Math Scientists and Research Analysts are projected to total 105,440 workers or 3.3% of the workforce in 2005. Compare this to the 15 job titles in Food & Beverage Service (225,510, 7.2%) or 2 job titles Retail Clerk and Stock Clerk, 107,960 workers, 3.4% of 2005 workforce or 7 job titles for Motor Vehicle Operators (trucks, vans, taxi etc.) 107,960 3.4%.

Source: Wisconsin Projections 1994 - 2005, Department of Workforce Development, September 1997.

Graph I Wisconsin Occupations with the Greatest Expected Employment in 2005

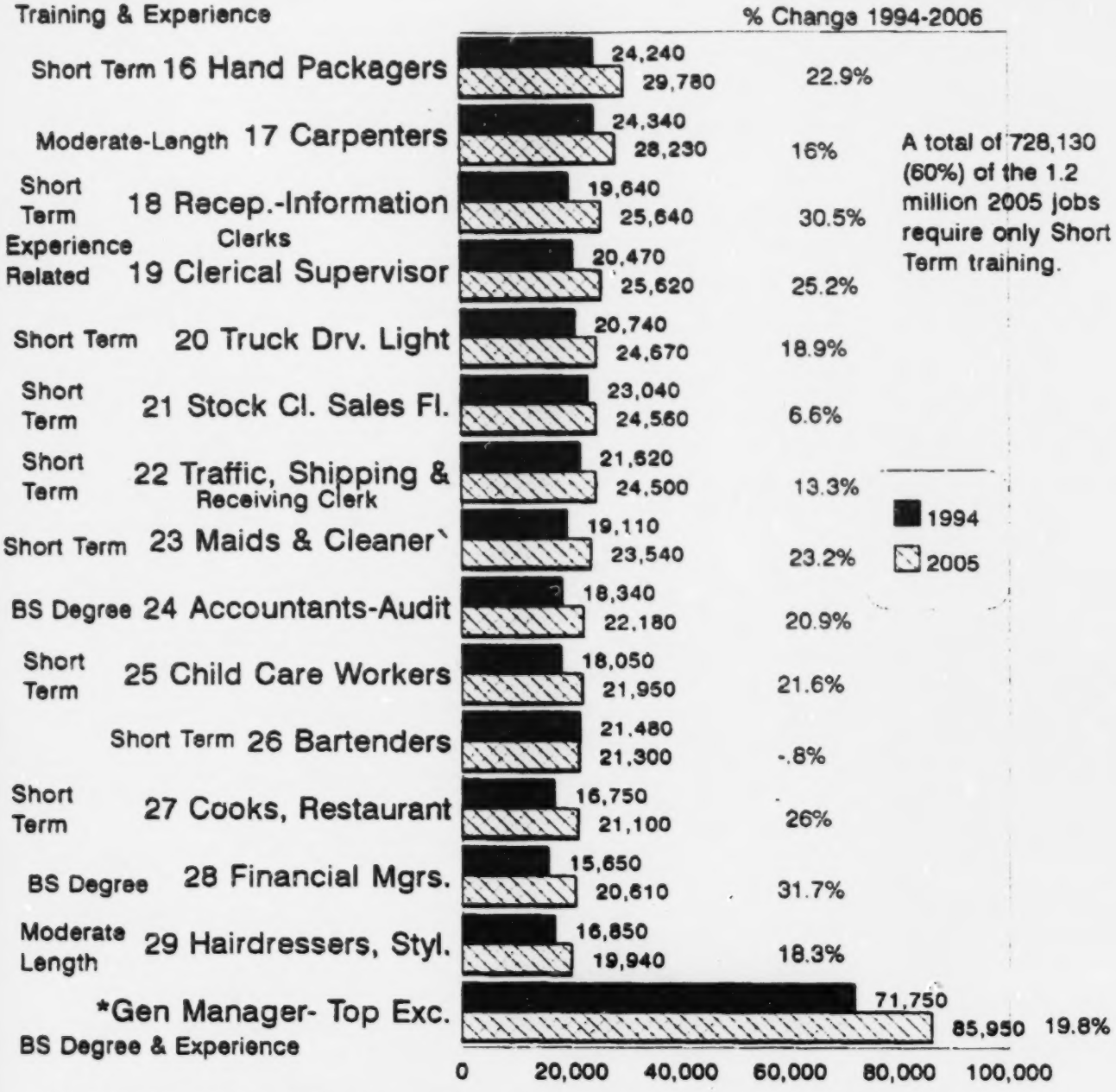
Total Wisconsin Workforce 1994 2.68 million, projected to be 3.16 million in 2005.



Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Workforce Development, Wisconsin Projections 1994-2005, September 1997
ERPD Consulting February 1998

Graph 2 Wisconsin Occupations with the Greatest Expected Employment in 2005 16 to 30

The 30 occupations listed represent about 4% of job titles and 1.2 million workers, 38% of all Wisconsin workers in 2005.

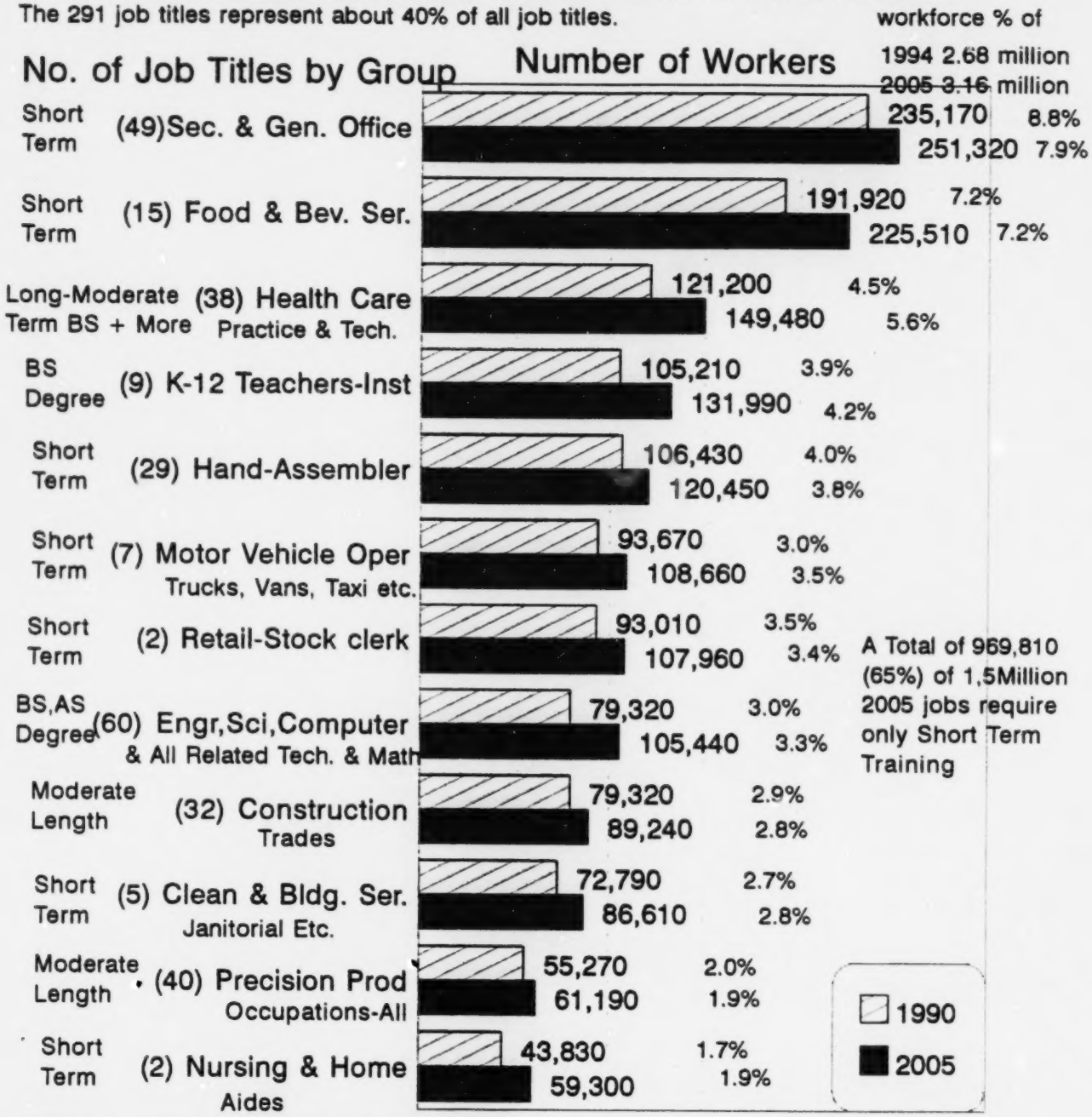

Training & Experience
% Change 1994-2006
Short Term 16 Hand Packagers 24,240 29,780 22.9%
Moderate-Length 17 Carpenters 24,340 28,230 16%
Short Term Experience Related 18 Recep.-Information Clerks 19,640 25,640 30.5%
19 Clerical Supervisor 20,470 25,620 25.2%
Short Term 20 Truck Drv. Light 20,740 24,670 18.9%
Short Term 21 Stock Cl. Sales Fl. 23,040 24,560 6.6%
Short Term 22 Traffic, Shipping & Receiving Clerk 21,620 24,500 13.3%
Short Term 23 Maids & Cleaner 19,110 23,540 23.2%
BS Degree 24 Accountants-Audit 18,340 22,180 20.9%
Short Term 25 Child Care Workers 18,050 21,950 21.6%
Short Term 26 Bartenders 21,480 21,300 -.8%
Short Term 27 Cooks, Restaurant 16,750 21,100 26%
BS Degree 28 Financial Mgrs. 15,650 20,610 31.7%
Moderate Length 29 Hairdressers, Styl. 16,850 19,940 18.3%
*Gen Manager- Top Exc. 71,750 85,950 19.8%
BS Degree & Experience
A total of 728,130 (60%) of the 1.2 million 2005 jobs require only Short Term training.
1994
2005
0
20,000
40,000
60,000
80,000
100,000

* A category not a specific occupation Degree is not always a requirement

Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Workforce Development, Wisconsin Projections 1994-2005, September 1997
ERPD Consulting February 1998

Graph 3 Employment in the State of Wisconsin 1994 & 2005 in Selected Occupational Areas

The 12 Occupational Areas total 1.5 million workers in 2005, 47.5% of all workers.
The 291 job titles represent about 40% of all job titles.



Graph 3 - Latest update by ERPD Consulting 4/13/98

Number in parentheses indicates the number of job titles included in the group

Source: Graph by ERPD Consulting, Source of data Wisconsin Dept. of Workforce Development, Wisconsin Projections 1994-2005, September 1997

Analysis of U.S. Occupational Projections to 2006

- "Total employment is projected to increase by 18.6 million jobs over the 1996-2006 period, rising from 132.4 million to 150.9 million, according to the latest projection of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLU)." Among the 500 occupations projected, 30 occupations account for 8.7 million (47%) of the projected job growth. (see Graph I & II)

- A majority of the top 30 occupations with the largest numerical job growth, 18 (60%) are Short Term Training jobs with the lowest earning ranks for full-time workers, one occupation requires a moderate-length training, 5 require a Bachelor's degree, one requires an Associate degree, 3 require Work experience in a related occupation, and one, General Mangers & Top Executives, "may" require BS or more and work experience. (see Graph I & II) The latter category is so broad that 33% of all managers or administrators in the U.S. or Wisconsin are listed as General Mangers & Top Executives. It should not be considered as an individual occupation.

- The top 30 occupations (6% of 500 occupations) total 40.3 million workers, 30.5% of all workers, in 1994 and are projected to total 49 million, 32.5% of all workers in 2006.

- It is projected that there will be a total of 50.6 million job openings 1994 to 2006. A total of 32 million will be replacement workers and 18.6 million is projected growth in new jobs. A majority of job openings (54.5%) will be in Short Term training on the job openings 21.9 million (43.4%) or Moderate-length training or experience job openings 5.6 million or 11.1%, (See Graph III)

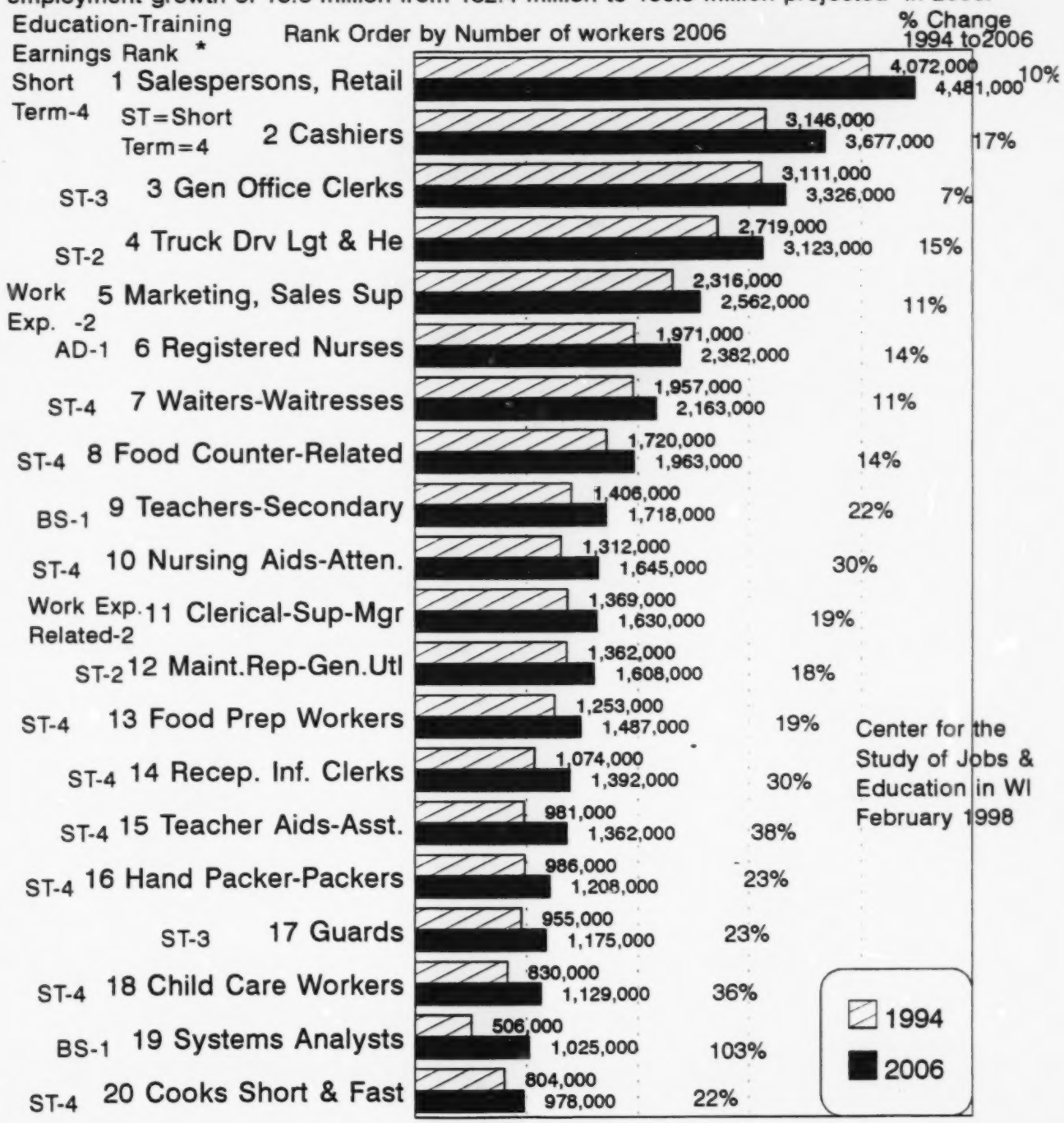
- The 18 Short Term training occupations in the top 30 occupations are projected to employ 32.4 million workers which is 66% of the 49 million workers projected in these 30 in 2006. Employment in these 18 occupations of 32.4 million represents 21.5% of "all" projected jobs in 2006. The 3 high tech occupations in the top 30, Systems Analysts, Computer Engineers and (Database administrators, computer support specialists and "all" other computer scientists) are projected to employ 1.9 million, 4% of the top 30 and 1.3% of "all" workers in 2006. Compare this to the 4.5 million projected retail clerks, 3% of all workers in 2006. (see Graph I & II)

- Almost half of the 30 fastest growing occupations have significant employment in the health services sector. A majority of these jobs require only short term training.

Source: Occupational Employment Projections to 2006, Bureau of Labor Statistics Monthly Labor Review, November 1997

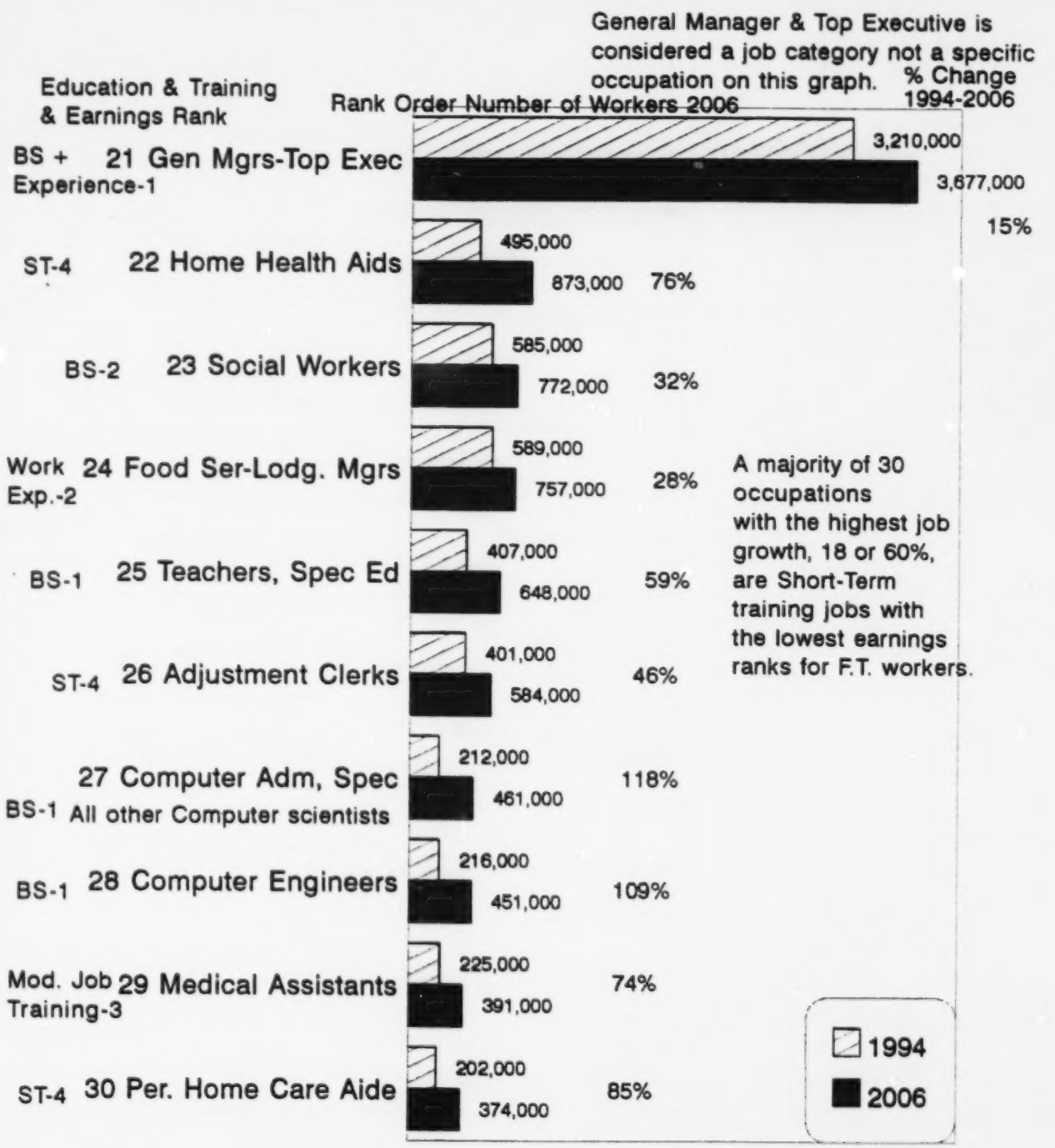
Graph I-U.S. Occupations with Largest Numerical Job Growth 1994-2006

Among the 500 occupations projected, 30 account for 8.7 million (47%) of total employment growth of 18.6 million from 132.4 million to 150.9 million projected in 2006.



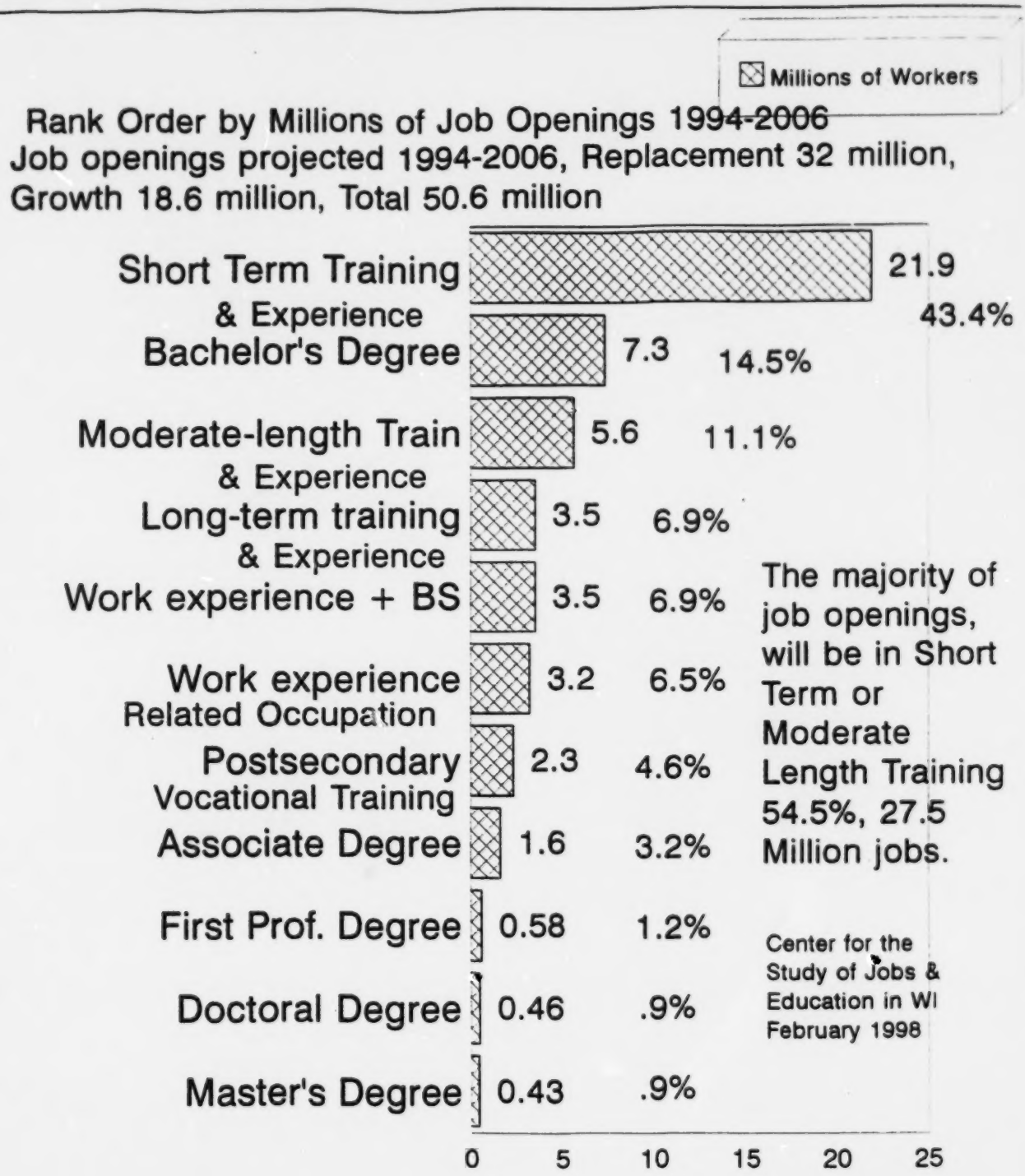
*Education & Training Category ST = Short Term job training: AD = Associate Degree BS = Bachelor's Degree, Salary quartile rank, median weekly earnings of F.T. Workers 1= highest median earnings 4= lowest, Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor Statistics 11/97

Graph II U.S. Occupations with Largest Numerical Job Growth 1994-2006
Remaining 10 of top 30



Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor Statistics, November 1997
Graph by Center for the Study of Jobs & Education in Wisconsin 2/98

Graph III Projected Total Job Openings by Level of Education and Training in the United States 1994-2006



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment & Job Openings 1994-2006

The Big Con

The term con may be defined as "To defraud; dupe; swindle". Utilizing the super hoax, the high tech, high skill and high pay jobs of the future, a big con has been successfully pulled off by the business interests using politicians and educators feeding at the trough. The media gleefully thrives on the super hoax and the bashing of schools to make the big con possible. Some in the media like Hendrick Smith are getting rich telling fairy tales.

The tales of woe about the U.S. public education systems and the lack of "skilled" workers has been told forever by the business interests and their brethren in the 20th Century. The bashing of schools in the 1990's has intensified with the evolving global economy and the claimed inability of our schools to produce a competitive workforce. When the U.S. economy flounders workers and schools are blamed and the educational systems of Japan and Germany etc. are extolled. When the U.S. economy flourishes and Japan and Germany etc. decline "no" credit is given to U.S. schools or workers who are today the most highly educated and productive workers in the world. The use of schools and workers as scapegoats for the social and economic problems of the United States and Wisconsin is a big con.

The inspiration for my writing this big con piece is my annual review of U.S. Dept. of Labor statistics and the September 1997 Wisconsin DWD "Wisconsin Projections 1994 - 2005. This is the third analysis of U.S. and Wisconsin occupational projections done by the writer in the last five years. While there have been changes and shifts in some individual occupational areas, the overall employment outlook for U.S. workers in regard to categories of jobs available and earnings has not changed appreciably. The numbers of jobs being created currently is above average but the categories of jobs being created are not changing appreciably in total and the earnings of most workers are not increasing significantly.

Supposedly, in times of low unemployment, as as been the case in Wisconsin for most of the 1990's and more recently in the nation as a whole, wages should be rising significantly. Wisconsin continued to be a below average income state in the 1990's with an unemployment rate well below national averages. The raising of the minimum wage by the federal government appears to be the primary stimulus for worker earnings increasing and not supply and demand forces. However, there has been some increases in earnings recently in high demand job categories in Wisconsin and the U.S.

The majority of the "jobs of the future" are not in high tech and so called technical occupations or "high skill" manufacturing jobs. Manufacturing jobs can now be done by illiterate children in third world countries. Computers and high tech devices are made by workers without any advanced math education anywhere in the world.

My elementary school grandchildren can operate computer software and use the Internet with better techniques than I can because I never had any formal education of any kind in the use of computers. (However since retirement I have become an expert on computers.) My pre-school grandchildren can use interactive television CD's by themselves after a few minutes of instruction. What is the big deal about computer education and the need to waste millions of dollars wiring up to the Internet and using high priced university people to

train teachers to do what many elementary school kids can already do.

Technology and computer related equipment make jobs easier not more difficult. Should we require retail clerks to take physics because they operate high tech cash registers. Should we require foundry workers to take trigonometry because they have to push a button on a machine that makes complex mathematical adjustments in the manufacturing of a casting.

The "jobs of the future" are mostly located in places like nursing homes and other health related facilities, restaurants, tourist attractions and facilities and shopping malls. Temporary workers and service occupations in lower paying job titles are numerically the fastest growing job sectors if not by percentage. The U.S. has a glut of highly educated workers in most fields including mathematics and science. Shortages are temporary as demand changes.

As indicated by Bureau of Labor statistics the "jobs of the future" require mostly short term training and/or experience not long term training or experience. This training is done in most cases "on the job" not in schools.

How can the big con in education and the hoaxes upon which the big con is based continue year after year? It is a world-wide con perpetuated by the media and financed by the business interests and government agencies. Schools are bad, obsolete, failures, non-competitive, etc. etc. is the story line that never changes from year to year, no matter what the evidence may show. Constant repetition of the education hoaxes and the big con by so called experts in education matters and government agencies feeding at the public or private trough have made the hoaxes givens. Hard evidence is no longer necessary to prove a hoax to be fact.

The U.S. Department of Education very existence may depend on perpetuating the hoaxes. For example, the startling discovery by the U.S. Dept. of Education headlined in the October 20, 1997 USA Today, "Math cited as key to achievement". Unbelievably they have discovered, "High school students who take algebra and geometry and other rigorous math courses are much more likely to be successful in college or the workforce, says a U.S. Department of Education report out today." It is an awful joke that I have used in my presentations. They don't even say "pass" these courses. Evidently just enrolling in these courses will create miracles of success for "all" students. Requiring all 9th graders in the Milwaukee Public Schools to take algebra has been a disaster. Three thousand (somewhat less than 50%) and more poor MPS 9th graders have been failing algebra each year for the last four years.

There are at least five national centers like the National Center for Research in Vocational Education competing for money from government agencies and private sources to perpetuate the hoaxes and the big con. The business interests and foundations like the Milwaukee Bradley Foundation pour millions into bogus research designed to destroy public education. The academically disadvantaged media gleefully reports school bashing from any source. Others like Hedrick Smith make big money bashing U.S. K-12 education. It is outrageous.

Dennis W. Redovich
Center for the Study of Jobs & Education in Wisconsin
February 1998

What is the big con in education?

- A majority of new and replacement jobs projected to the year 2005-6 in the U.S. and Wisconsin require only short term or moderate length training or experience. In Wisconsin perhaps 60% of these jobs.

- Perhaps 3% to 4% of all jobs in the U.S. or Wisconsin "might" require higher math or science skills. This includes 60 job titles of engineers, scientists, technicians, related math and computer related occupations.

- The high-tech, high skill and high pay jobs of the future are a hoax.

- The United States has the most highly educated and productive workers in the world.

- The use of schools and workers as scapegoats for our nations social and economic problems is the big con. Schools have been bashed by politicians, "the business interests" and the learned elite forever. Bashing schools is a world wide phenomena in the 20th Century. But not new, Aristotle was bashing schools more than 2,000 years ago.

- The con has been conceived by too many people, including educators and public officials feeding at the trough and is gleefully perpetuated without question by an academically disadvantaged media.

- All data, definitions and classifications of jobs as requiring short term training or experience are from official U.S. and State of Wisconsin government sources.

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